

The Buffalo Music Hall of Fame Room at the Hard Rock Café

About the highlighted members

10,000 Maniacs – BMHOF Class of 1994
Natalie Merchant – BMHOF Class of 2013



By producing, manufacturing and marketing their own recordings, 10,000 Maniacs were the original “indie” band. One of the most critically acclaimed bands of the last three decades, 10,000 Maniacs were founded by Robert Buck, Dennis Drew, Steven Gustafson, John Lombardo and Natalie Merchant in the fall of 1981. Jerry Augustyniak joined in 1983. Together with artists like R.E.M. they defined college rock and created the first wave of alternative rock bands and what became known as the alternative rock format on FM radio. Writing and performing powerful, danceable and socially conscious original material in and around their hometown of Jamestown, New York the group toured extensively. 10,000 Maniacs celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2011. The current lineup consists of Jerome Augustyniak, Dennis Drew, Jeff Erickson, Steven Gustafson and Mary Ramsey. Natalie Merchant was inducted as a solo artist in 2013.

Brian McKnight – BMHOF Class of 1998



Growing up in Buffalo and learning to sing in the choir of the Emmanuel Temple, Brian McKnight has earned himself a spot in contemporary music history with the release of many albums, several of which have gone platinum to triple platinum, including 1998’s “Anytime” and has sold over 20 million albums worldwide. One of the hottest R&B musicians in the U.S., he’s performed with artists like Vanessa Williams and Boyz II Men. For his outstanding work in music, Brian has received numerous awards and nominations including Grammys, Soul Train Awards, NAACP Image Awards, MTV Video Music Awards, BET Awards and American Music Awards.

Brian continues to grow his industry exposure as a red carpet host for Extra! and has seen phenomenal success in touring musical theatre. Brian has also hosted “Soul Session Countdown with Brian McKnight” on BETJ and co-hosted “The Brian McKnight Morning Show” on KTWV the Wave Smooth Jazz radio station in LA for two years. A second radio show titled “The Brian McKnight Show” took the air in 2008 and is syndicated on ABC radio coast to coast.

Ani DiFranco – BMHOF Class of 1996



Born in Buffalo, New York, Ani DiFranco has been acclaimed by Billboard Magazine as probably the most successful independent artist in the country. Ani spent part of her twenties in New York City, and then returned to her hometown where she established first a business office and then a performance venue called Babeville.

Early in her career, Ani made a choice that is now so obvious to so many people that it’s hard to remember it was once considered brazen: to say no to every record label deal that came her way, and yes to being her own boss. That decision has earned her plenty of attention over the years, but it has never been what brought sold-out crowds to her shows around the world, fans debating every nuance of her lyrics, and fellow performers clamoring to work with her. No, all that has more to do with another choice she made early in life: To use her voice and her guitar as honestly and unflinchingly as she could, writing and playing songs that came straight from her own experience, her boundless imagination, her sharp wit, and her ever-more-nuanced understanding of how the world works. She did it in noisy bars with nothing but a shaved head and a lone guitar in 1990, and she’s doing it with renewed intensity today.

Gary Mallaber – BMHOF Class of 1997



Gary Mallaber, born in Buffalo, New York, is a session drummer, percussionist and singer. He got his start playing drums in a band from Buffalo known as Raven. Mallaber also plays keyboards and sings on many albums by well-known rock artists. He is probably best known for his work as drummer/percussionist, backup singer, and co-composer for The Steve Miller Band.

Mallaber was also the main studio drummer for Eddie Money for most of his earlier recordings and has played on many Bruce Springsteen and Van Morrison solo albums. His first famous song was the recording of “Moon Dance” with Van Morrison. The cymbal you see here was played on Bruce Springsteen’s recording of “Lucky Town”. Gary was also in the 1974 Brian DePalma film Phantom of the Paradise, in addition to performing on the film’s sound track. He is also seen in the film as the drummer for the Juicy Fruits, the Beach Bums, and The Undeads.

In addition to drums, Mallaber plays vibraphone on the Morrison records. He has played on hit singles by Miller, Morrison, Springsteen, Peter Frampton, Poco, Paul Williams, and Kermit the Frog. Some of the many other artists Mallaber has recorded with include Joan Armatrading, The Beach Boys, David Cassidy, Bonnie Raitt, Tom Rush, Bob Seger, Joe Brucato, Barbra Streisand, Warren Zevon, Hughes/Thrall and Gerard McMahan.

Rick James – BMHOF Class of 1996



Brilliant hitmaker, soulful singer, riveting performer, influential producer/impresario, pioneer in the fusion of funk groove and rock attitude – Rick James was all of these and more. Flamboyant, provocative, charismatic, volatile and always outrageous, he was a consummate artist and a bona fide star.

Coming from the streets of Buffalo and a former Toronto band mate of Neil Young (The Mynah Birds), The King of Funk was one of the most successful black crossover artists of the early 80’s. Born James Johnson, Jr., in Buffalo, New York, he was connected to the music world at birth as the nephew of Temptations singer Melvin Franklin. Though best known for unstoppable funk jams like “Super Freak” and “Give It to Me, Baby,” his impact is evident not only in the chart stats, but in his artistic contributions as a composer and songwriter. In addition to his recordings he produced and presented, “Process & the Doo Rags”, “The Mary Jane Girls” and “Teena Marie”.

Constantly reaching, growing and exploring new aspects of his talent were all part of the genius of Rick James. Since he burst upon the scene in the late 70’s with his unique brand of Punk Funk music, he has been an inspiration to his peers and won the acclaim of audiences and critics alike. James’ left us far too soon, but his legacy continues to inspire new generations of artists to get their super freak on.

Nino Tempo & April Stevens – BMHOF Class of 1999



In 1963 Nino Tempo and April Stevens made local history when they became the first Western New York act of the rock era to score a Number 1 single with “Deep Purple”. Originally from Niagara Falls, USA, this brother and sister duo earned a Grammy Award when the song was named Best Rock ‘n’ Roll song of the year. According to April Stevens (Carol LoTempio), the song almost didn’t happen. She explained, “The song started out as a joke. Nino was just sitting and fooling around with the piano”. She continued. “We did the song in one take, with a few minutes left of studio time”. Guitarists for April Stevens/Nino Tempo were session guitarists Glen Campbell and Niagara Falls’ own Tommy Tedesco who were both members of the famed “Wrecking Crew”.

When asked about his reaction to being inducted into the Buffalo Music Hall of Fame, April stated, “We grew up in Niagara Falls and to get such recognition in your home area means a lot”. Nino added, “We’re both very grateful and it’s very flattering. Back there is where it all started for us and that’s why this means so much”.

Calato Manufacturing – Regal Tip – BMHOF Class of 2001



Necessity is the mother of invention. No one knows this better than Joe Calato, who revolutionized the drumstick industry in 1958. Prior to that time only wood tip sticks were available. Although the sound was great, many drummers were frustrated when their wood tips wore out too quickly. That’s when professional drummer and woodworker, Joe Calato, decided to try to make a stick that would last longer and would offer a new, cutting edge sound.

After much experimenting, Joe perfected the idea. A drumstick with a nylon tip that stayed on, didn’t shatter and produced a sound pleasing to the ear. In fact, the sound was so pleasing that it helped define the musical styles of the day with its signature clarity on the drumheads and ride cymbals.

Joe’s invention marked a revolution in percussion manufacturing and design that continues today. To this day the drum world credits Joe Calato with establishing modern standards in drumstick crafting.

In 2003 Regal Tip introduced one of its most significant contributions and inventions...the E-Tip, which is manufactured of nylon, for durability, but offers the warmer sound of wood on the cymbals. Of the three types of tips available to drummers today, two were invented by Regal Tip. All Regal Tip products continue to be manufactured at the company’s facility in Niagara Falls, NY under the watchful eye of 2nd and 3rd generation Calato family members, as well as long-time, dedicated employees.

The Percussive Arts Society recognized Joe’s contribution to the percussion world in 2001, when they inducted him into the Hall of Fame.

Harold Arlen (born Hyman Arluck) – BMHOF Class of 1997



Harold Arlen wrote some of the greatest hits from the 30’s and 40’s, including the entire score to the classic movie, The Wizard of Oz. Songs such as Over the Rainbow, Get Happy, Stormy Weather, It’s Only a Paper Moon, I’ve Got the World on a String, and Last Night When We Were Young are just some of the standards that live on today and have distinguished Harold

Arlen as one of the Great American Composers of the 20th Century.

Harold Arlen, born Hyman Arluck in 1905, began his career as a singer and piano player in Buffalo. He dropped out of Hutchinson High School at 16 and formed The Snappy Trio and later The Se-Mor Jazz Band. In the summers of 1923-25, with The Southbound Shufflers, he played on The Canadiana – the Crystal Beach boat that took Americans to Canada where prohibition did not exist.

In 1925 Harold became a member of the Yankee Six, as their pianist, vocalist and arranger. They were the house band at Geyer’s Restaurant and Ballroom, in the center of the Buffalo theater district. Harold was earning the considerable sum of \$100.00 a week. The group became an 11 piece unit, changed their name to The Buffalodians and their popularity took them out of town. Music history was about to be written.

Goo Goo Dolls – BMHOF Class of 1995



Formed in 1986 and consisting of Johnny Rzeznik (guitarist), Robbie Takac and George Tutuska (bass and drums respectively), the Goo’s originally called themselves “Sex Maggot.” An ad for “Goo Goo Dolls” in True Detective magazine inspired them to try a new moniker, and it stuck.

Early Metal Blade releases brought the Goo’s national acclaim, but their tours were long on dates and short on monetary compensation. “A Boy Named Goo” changed all of that. Today The Goo Goo Dolls are one of the most successful recording acts in the country and they are selling out venues around the world. Their albums top the charts and they have been nominated for several Grammy Awards. Still they have not forgotten their hometown of Buffalo. They have performed sell-out shows which have raised money for local charities. Robbie’s “Music is Art (MiA)” Foundation, which is dedicated to connecting music and the community, celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2012.

Jessie Galante – BMHOF Class of 2010



Crowned the First Lady of Buffalo Rock, Jessie Galante has enjoyed a very successful career. With her band, Actor, she rapidly became the number one female singer in the region and received radio play from the area’s top radio stations. Moving to LA she formed the band Fire that gained massive acclaim as one of LA’s best bands with a series of sold out shows. After that group disbanded, she returned to the Buffalo area to concentrate on a solo career. She is a prolific recording artist with a following in both the U.S. and Europe. A charismatic and dynamic performer, Galante was meant to be on stage and in the spotlight.

George “Hound Dog” Lorenz – Class of 1996



When one thinks about Buffalo rock ‘n’ roll radio, the names Tom Shannon, Dan Neaverth and Sandy Beach come to mind. But one name towers above them all, that of the legendary George “Hound Dog” Lorenz.

Lorenz was Buffalo born and raised and spent most of his career in Western New York. But what many people forget is that the Hound worked from 1953 to 1955 in Cleveland, with a 9-11:30 p.m. show on WSRs. Prior to his Cleveland stay, the Hound had started his career at WBTA in Batavia, NY in 1947, later moving on to WXRL in Lancaster, NY and WJLL in Niagara Falls, NY.

In 1955, powerful 50,000-watt WKBW lured Lorenz back to Buffalo from Cleveland and he never left. At ‘KB, he became a Buffalo phenomenon, with a fan club numbering 70,000 and a huge listener following up and down the eastern U.S. and Canada. Not only did teenagers listen to his radio show, they flocked to shows he put on that included the likes of Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino and Buddy Holly.

Lorenz left ‘KB in 1958 when that station went to a Top 40 format; he didn’t like the idea of being told what to play or how to do his show. In the 1960s, he founded WBLK-FM in Buffalo, one of the first FM stations to regularly program African-American music. He touched the lives of many people and in doing so changed the fabric of the country. His radio shows were heard all over the world. He was a pioneer. He brought the music to the common man, and was himself a common man.

We end as always with The Hound:

“There ain’t no more son. It’s splittin’ and quitten’ time. As always we ask you to play it straight on the street, of course. And to my very own Miss Fine waiting down the line, the Hound Dog says like aaaa laaaattter!” And with the hound dog howl carrying into the “Big Heavy,” The Hound Dog signed off.

Paul Varga, Billy Sheehan, Dave Constantino – BMHOF Class of 1983



The first Buffalo Music Hall of Fame alumni automatically inducted on the strength of three consecutive Buffalo Music Awards top honors, the members of Talas were inducted individually. (In fact, no band would be inducted collectively until the Tweeds won the honor almost a decade later.)

Talas, a power trio with Billy Sheehan on bass, Dave Constantino on guitar and Paul Varga on drums was one of Buffalo’s most popular local bands for over a decade. The band played a mixture of cover songs and original material, and all three instrumentalists alternated on lead vocals.

In 1978, Talas released their eponymous debut album, which generated the regional hit single, “See Saw”. It was during this time that Sheehan wrote some of his most famous songs, namely “Shy Boy” (later re-recorded with David Lee Roth), and the complex and frenetic “Addicted to that Rush” (later re-recorded with Mr. Big). Talas re-formed in 2012 for a highly attended concert at Hard Rock Café’s Summer Concert Series.

Tommy Tedesco – BMHOF Class of 1996



Through most of the 1960s and 1970s, the Niagara Falls native was a Los Angeles session guitarist, part of a loose-knit group of about 20 musicians nicknamed the “Wrecking Crew” that played on an astonishing amount of the music we associate with that era. His guitar lines helped create the California sound. When you listen to Jan & Dean or The Beach Boys, there is a good chance you are hearing Tommy Tedesco. During the 60’s and 70’s he also recorded with Frank Zappa, Cher, Barbara Streisand, Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Ella Fitzgerald and many more artists. He is possibly on more albums, of all styles of music, than any other session guitarist. Not bad for a guy who, according to his son Denny, was called the “worst student he ever had” by his guitar teacher in Niagara Falls.

In addition to performing Tommy Tedesco was an influential music educator, writing the instructional – For Guitar Players Only: Short Cuts in Technique, Sight Reading and Studio Playing. He also wrote two books, “Tommy Tedesco – Confessions of a Guitar Player” and “Anatomy of a Guitar Player”.

Tommy passed away on November 10, 1997, but the guitar lines he created will live forever.

Buffalo Bills Barbershop Quartet – Class of 2009



Long before professional football came to Buffalo, New York, another group of men formed what can be considered to be the original Buffalo Bills, the legendary barbershop quartet. Forming in 1945, Barber Shop Four had an inauspicious beginning in international competition, placing 16th at Oklahoma City in 1948. In Omaha in 1950 the international gold medals were hung around their necks and a new era of barbershop harmony began. Their big sound, combined with the work of Phil Embry and other talented arrangers, kept them busy singing on barber-shop shows and gave them a popularity no other Society quartet had achieved. In 1957 Meredith Willson wrote a stage musical and, after meeting the group, decided to include a barbershop quartet in his new Broadway play, “The Music Man”. When the final curtain rang down on the Buffalo Bills, they left behind an unbeatable legacy – 1,510 performances on Broadway, 728 concerts, 675 radio shows, 672 nightclub and hotel appearances, 626 conventions, 216 television shows, 137 state fair performances, and a major motion picture. The Buffalo Bills sang their last show at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City on May 24, 1967.

Members of the Quartet:

Vern Reed (1947-1967)	Wayne “Scotty” Ward (1957-1967)
Al Shea (1947-1967)	Bill Spangenberg (1947-1962)
Herschel Smith (1947-1950)	Jim Jones (1962-1967)
Dick Grapes (1950-1957)	